Sir:

NAPOLEON AS FIRST CONSUL

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Since you would like to know when, where, and under what conditions I drew the pencil portrait of Napoleon just sent to you, here is the account:

In 1801 I was made a member of the Cisalpine delegation which went to Lyons in order to draft under the presidency of Napoleon, then First Consul, the constitution of my country When all was settled the First Consul came to preside in person over the Cisalpine Assembly, knowing he would be elected president of our republic, to which he gave under those conditions the name of Italian Republic.

I was seated not far from him during the time when a rather prolix and fulsome orator recited a wordy speech destitute of sense and taste. Possibly Bonaparte was paying no attention: but he looked quietly at the speaker, thinking of something more important. I saw him. in profile as he is represented in my drawing, and a fine light coming from the large window in the front of the church where we were gathered marked his nose rather more strongly than the rest of his features. The sketch, almost completed, was so nearly an entire success that little remained to be done in finishing it. Everybody both in Lyons and Paris, whither I afterwards went, thought it at the time the most striking portrait of that extraordinary man.

This, Sir, is my account of the portrait. I am at your service.

Milan, June 4, 1828. Most devotedly, JosEpH LoNGHI.

Now in the Bodleian Library.